



Department of Justice

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TWO MORE ADMIT GUILT IN ILLEGAL GUN TRAFFICKING RING

One possessed a gun in drug trafficking crime

COLUMBUS – Hakim Shariff, age 27 and Adborahamane Camara, age 26, both of Columbus, pleaded guilty in United States District Court here today to crimes connected with an illegal central Ohio gun trafficking ring.

Shariff pleaded guilty to one count of using a firearm in a drug trafficking offense. Camara pled guilty to one count of making false statements while purchasing firearms on behalf of another, a practice known as “straw purchasing.”

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Christopher Sadowski, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) announced the pleas entered today before Senior U.S. District Judge James L. Graham.

Charges against both men stemmed from an investigation into firearms trafficking ring originating with Mark Andrew Nelson, age 35, of Johnstown and Robert L. Cook, age 52, a licensed firearms dealer in Westerville.

On two occasions, Nelson enlisted Camara to complete paperwork claiming he was the actual purchaser of firearms from Cook. Camara never took the firearms. Nelson took them instead.

Shariff pleaded guilty to carrying a 9mm firearm when he sold more than two pounds of marijuana to an individual on Columbus’ West Side on July 1, 2005. Shariff also sold the firearm he was carrying to the person who bought the marijuana. Sheriff had received the gun through the scheme Nelson was operating.

Nelson pleaded guilty on August 8 pleaded guilty to one count of making a false statement in acquisition of a firearm and Cook pleaded guilty on August 10 to one count of selling a firearm to a prohibited person. Others entering guilty pleas in connection with the trafficking operation include Ricky Frank Nelson, age 47, Columbus, Mark Nelson’s brother; Phaedra Ann Nelson, age 33, Johnstown, Mark Nelson’s wife; and James Robert Crook, age 65, Columbus, Mark Nelson’s father-in-law.

“The illegal trafficking placed more than 300 guns on the streets and in the hands of criminals,” Lockhart said. “Once again we see that illegal firearms and drugs are illicit partners in crimes committed in our communities.”

“For 18 months, ATF agents have been trying to find out just how far this thread of illegal activity winds,” Sadowski said. “We will continue to make illegal gun traffickers pay for their crimes that put guns in the hands of criminals.”

Camara faces up to five years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$125,000 and three years of supervised release. Shariff faces at least ten years imprisonment. ATF agents arrested Shariff and Camara on June 16. They have been in custody since their arrest.

Lockhart commended the ATF agents for their continued pursuit of the case and Assistant U.S. Attorney Doug Squires, who is prosecuting the case.

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